

# The COURT COMPASS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS JUDICIAL BRANCH

## Trial Court Thanks Employees Who Have Served Forty Years

After forty-six years of working for the Boston Juvenile Court, Chief Probation Officer Joseph M. O'Reilly remains excited by the possibilities of his job.

"This is a very good time to be in probation," Mr. O'Reilly said, at a luncheon in November hosted by Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara in honor of twenty-two employees who have served the Trial Court for forty years or more.

District Court Chief Justice Samuel E. Zoll, Juvenile Court Chief Justice Martha P. Grace, Middlesex Probate and Family Court First Justice Sheila E. McGovern, Administrative Office of the Trial Court Acting Chief of Staff Marilyn Wellington, Commissioner of Probation John J. O'Brien, Office of Community Corrections Director Stephen V. Price and AOTC Planning and Development Director Mary Jane Moreau also extended their appreciation to the long-serving employees. The lunch-

*Appreciation Luncheon continued on page 2*



Newton District Court First Justice Dyanne J. Klein, center, meets with Middlesex County Juvenile Court Probation Officer Debra L. D'Arcy, left, and Newton District Court Assistant Clerk-Magistrate Catherine M. Coughlin, right, following distribution of the brochure they produced with the help of a Reinventing Justice mini-grant.

## 'Mini-Grants' Boost Efforts by Ten Courts to Reach Out to Local Communities

Concerned by a rise in alcohol and substance abuse by teenagers, the judges and staff of the Newton District Court for several years had wanted to publish a brochure explaining to young people and their parents what resources were available for addressing the problem.

The opportunity to achieve that goal appeared in September, 2000, when the Administrative Office of the Trial Court sought applications for ten Public Trust and Confidence "mini-grants" funded by the Massachusetts Trial Court's Reinventing Justice Initiative. The grants, totaling \$25,000, were designed to provide a small amount of funding to help judges and court staff develop significant projects for making the courts more responsive to the public.

The projects "didn't have to be very costly, but be creative," said Mary Jane Moreau, Director of AOTC's Planning and Development Department, which administered the grants.

The Newton District Court won a grant of \$3,961, and saw its efforts bear fruit last October with the publication of a sixteen-page brochure entitled "Teens,

*Mini-Grants*

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eon was the second in two years to thank people who have worked in the Trial Court for forty years or more.

Dan Rea, a 25-year veteran news reporter for Boston's WBZ-TV who is also a lawyer, served as the featured speaker at the event. "I'm in awe of anyone who can work forty years doing anything," Mr. Rea said. "I'm also humbled to realize that there is over 800 years of experience sitting in this room. I feel like a rookie reporter again."

Mr. O'Reilly, the longest-serving employee at the luncheon, later said he was very pleased by the event. "It's singularly important to people to be recognized for their work. It didn't make any difference what work they did, just that they've been doing it for forty years or more. I was very impressed."

He also explained why he looked forward to continuing his work. "We have a remarkable probation service in Massachusetts, maybe the most progressive in the entire country," he said.

He has seen many changes since his first day as a probation officer, on Nov. 15, 1955. Instead of offenses such as assault and battery and even



**Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara, left, presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Boston Juvenile Court Chief Probation Officer Joseph M. O'Reilly.**

murder, the Juvenile Court forty-six years ago dealt frequently with juveniles charged with evading fares, shining shoes and selling newspapers without a license, loitering, playing ball in the street, and penny-ante gambling.

Yet along with the increased seriousness of juvenile offenses is a wider range of tools that probation officers

can use to help juveniles steer away from trouble.

"The controls of families over their children have eroded, and the court has to be able to pick up what families had been doing. Now there are many more controls available to us," he said.

The work of associate probation officers in court allows probation officers to spend more time looking after their charges. "Probation officers now are identified out there in the community. They're working day and night, and on weekends," he said.

Electronic monitoring, community corrections and close cooperation between the courts and law enforcement agencies also help probation officers. "There is major cooperation among the courts and various other agencies the courts work with, including District Attorneys and police and sheriff's departments, each one doing what their specialty is."

Any advice to other employees in the court system?

"Just keep up the good work," he answered. ■

## Honorees

### 46 Years

**Joseph M. O'Reilly**  
Chief Probation Officer  
Boston Juvenile Court

### 45 Years

**Francis X. Holland**  
Assistant Clerk  
Dorchester District Court

**Elizabeth A. Moore**  
Assistant Clerk  
Suffolk Superior Court  
— Civil Business

### 42 Years

**Thomas J. Noonan**  
Clerk-Magistrate  
Worcester District Court

### 41 Years

**Carol A. Baker**  
Law Library Assistant  
Administrative Office  
of the Trial Court

**Maureen Callan**  
Assistant Clerk-Magistrate  
Brighton District Court

**Edward F. Conley**  
Case Specialist  
Suffolk Probate  
and Family Court

**John J. Connolly**  
Chief Probation Officer  
Norfolk Probate  
and Family Court

**Joanna Dellagona**  
Case Specialist  
Suffolk Probate  
and Family Court

**Michael J. Donovan**  
Clerk of Courts  
Suffolk Superior Court  
— Civil Business

**Marie A. Gardin**  
First Assistant Register  
Middlesex Probate  
and Family Court

**Edward J. Lawlor**  
Courtroom Procedures  
Clerk  
Middlesex Superior Court

**Irene M. Thomas**  
Assistant Register  
Middlesex Probate  
and Family Court

### 40 Years

**Genevieve Donnelly**  
Case Specialist  
Suffolk Probate  
and Family Court

**Francis T. Foley**  
Assistant Clerk  
Suffolk Superior Court  
— Civil Business

**Helen M. Foley**  
Assistant Clerk  
Suffolk Superior Court  
— Civil Business

**Margaret E. Guckert**  
Probation Operations  
Supervisor  
Newburyport District  
Court

**Jane M. Haviland**  
Assistant Clerk of the Courts  
Middlesex Superior Court

**Janice L. Hurley**  
Case Specialist  
West Roxbury  
District Court

**Elizabeth Jangrow**  
Assistant Clerk  
Hampden Superior Court

**Mary A. Packer**  
Head Administrative  
Assistant  
Norfolk Superior Court

**Edward J. Ricciardelli**  
Facilities Manager  
Essex Superior Court

# Supreme Judicial Court Returns to Salem

The Supreme Judicial Court heard five cases on appeal on October 2 in Salem, returning to the city where the Court heard its first cases 308 years earlier.

The cases concerned the modern topics of divorce, police stops and searches, public accommodation, and prisoners' rights, in sharp contrast to the witchcraft cases that began the Court's long history.

The Superior Court of Judicature — renamed the Supreme Judicial Court in 1780 — was created to replace the Court of Oyer and Terminor, which in 1692 had sentenced nineteen people to death for witchcraft. The new Court, however, did not allow "spectral evidence" and found all but three of the remaining fifty-six people accused of witchcraft to be not guilty. The three found guilty were later pardoned by the Governor.



Several hundred students, teachers, attorneys and interested citizens attended the October sitting, which was the SJC's second in Salem in the

modern era. The SJC also heard oral arguments at the Essex County Superior Court on January 3, 1993, to mark the Court's tercentenary.



**Above, Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall reviews the history of the SJC's beginnings in Salem, at a luncheon sponsored by the Essex County Bar Association at the historic Hawthorne Hotel following the sitting.**

**At left, Essex County Bar Association President Bruce N. Sachar, standing, welcomes the SJC to Salem before oral arguments begin. On the bench, from left, are Associate Justices Martha B. Sosman, Francis X. Spina, and John M. Greaney; Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall; and Associate Justices Roderick L. Ireland, Judith A. Cowin, and Robert J. Cordy. In front of the bench are Essex County Clerk of Courts Thomas H. Driscoll, Jr., and SJC Clerk for the Commonwealth Susan Mellen.**



*Mini-Grants**continued from page 1***Substance Abuse & Your Family — What You Can Do.**

The booklet contains the names and telephone numbers of Newton Public School drug counselors and police officers trained in handling issues that students may face. It also explains what CHINS (Children in Need of Services) Petitions are and how they may help families resolve a child's problematic behavior, as well as the options families may pursue before filing a CHINS Petition.

"We're always interested in seeing how the Court might become a better resource for the community," said Newton District Court First Justice Dyanne J. Klein. "We had been talking about publishing explanatory material on the CHINS process for

**'People in agencies know where to direct people, and the people who come here know a little more about what to expect from the outset. It has been very helpful.'**

— Worcester Assistant Register of Probate  
Christine D. Anthony

some time. When the opportunity to apply for the grant came along, we thought, 'This is perfect.'"

One thousand copies of the brochure have been printed in English, and 500 in Russian. The Court also printed 1,000 copies of a "Teen Help Card" list-

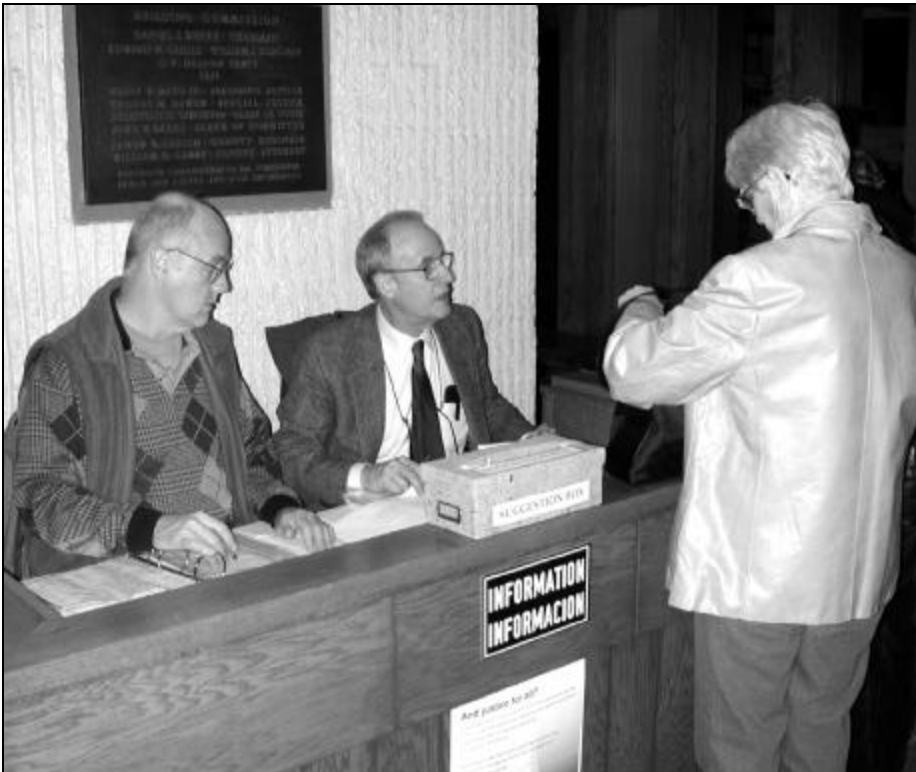
ing twenty-one telephone numbers of area hotlines and services, such as the Alcohol and Drug Hotline, Newton Juvenile Probation Office, Newton Wellesley Hospital, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Yet the grant provided for more than just printed materials. It also served as a catalyst for a broader effort, aimed at eighth-graders, to address youth substance abuse.

A committee that included Newton District Court Assistant Clerk-Magistrate Catherine M. Coughlin, Middlesex County Juvenile Court Probation Officer Debra L. D'Arcy, and representatives of the Newton Police Department and

*Mini-Grants**continued on page 5*

## Information Desks Help Put Visitors at Ease



Information desk volunteers Walter S. Haug, left, and T. Jeffrey Coolidge assist a visitor to the Lynn District Court. The pair have helped direct visitors to the busy court for more than two years. "Like in all volunteer work, there are two benefits," Mr. Haug said. "One, you're helping people, and two, you're helping yourself. It's a good feeling to be helping here, and this desk really does help take the load off other offices."

One result of the Trial Court's Reinventing Justice Initiative is immediately apparent to visitors at an increasing number of courts throughout the Commonwealth: volunteers at an information table near the entrance who can direct visitors to the particular office or courtroom they seek.

The Brockton Trial Court, Boston's Brooke Courthouse and McCormack Courthouse, the Hampshire County Courthouse, the Lynn District Court, the Springfield Hall of Justice, and the West Roxbury District Court now have information desks, with two more planned for the Essex Probate and Family Court in Salem and the Newburyport District Court.

The newest opened in early November in Northampton's Hampshire County Courthouse, which houses the Hampshire Superior Court, the Northampton District Court, and county government offices. Within a block of the historic courthouse where the kiosk is located are the Franklin-

*Information Desks**continued on page 5*

*Mini-Grants**continued from page 4*

Newton School Department oversaw the project. The committee last spring sent a joint letter from the Court, police chief, and school superintendent to the parents of every Newton eighth-grader, saying that alcohol and drug abuse was increasing among the city's youth. The committee then arranged for a theater troupe of recovering substance abusers, called "the Improbable Players," to perform at all four of Newton's middle schools.

The troupe's skits dealt with the problems caused by substance abuse. Following each performance, paid for by a grant from the Newton Police Department, the actors facilitated small-group discussions with the students.

Judge Klein, who attended a per-

formance and sat in on a discussion, said, "I was amazed that in these small group sessions, many students were able to reveal for the first time that substance abuse by family members was a real life issue for them. The session was truly an eye opener."

The final phase of the joint effort against youth substance abuse was the distribution in the fall of the help card to the class that attended the performances, now ninth-graders, and distribution of the brochure to their parents.

In addition to demonstrating the effectiveness of cooperation between the court and community organizations, the project also did a very good job of "letting the community know that the Court is not just here to punish people," Ms. Coughlin said.

## Worcester Probate and Family Court

In Worcester, Assistant Register of Probate Christine D. Anthony also saw the mini-grants as a way to help the Court respond to changes within its community.

Ms. Anthony estimates that up to 25 percent of the people served by the Worcester Probate and Family Court are Spanish speakers, and that each day six to eight people who come to the Registry speak no English and are unaccompanied by someone who can help them translate.

The Court thus applied for a mini-grant and received a sum of \$750 to help build ties to the Spanish-speaking

*Mini-Grants**continued on page 6**Information Desks**continued from page 4*

Hampshire Counties Juvenile Court and the Hampshire Probate and Family Court.

"People come to the Information Kiosk even before they reach the security station," said Northampton District Court First Assistant Clerk-Magistrate Karen L. Humphriss, who helped Clerk-Magistrate Genevieve L. Keller and Hampshire County Reinventing Justice Project Director Karen Henell organize the effort. "That way people who discover they're in the wrong building don't even have to go through the metal detectors."

The desk is staffed by volunteers from a service organization called the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. Every day two shifts of two volunteers, known as "Courthouse Navigators" and supplied with maps and court directories, help direct visitors from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

### Volunteers in Brockton

The Brockton Trial Court, aided by a Reinventing Justice mini-grant, also opened an information desk this year. The new, four-story courthouse

**'I've watched the faces of people coming in, not sure of where they're supposed to go, possibly in a traumatic situation. Having the information table puts them much more at ease.'**

— Plymouth County Juvenile Court Clerk-Magistrate Thomas R. Lebach

can be somewhat daunting for first-time visitors, as it houses four courts — the Brockton District Court, and Brockton courts of the Southeastern Housing Court, Plymouth Juvenile Court, and Plymouth Probate and Family Court — as well as offices of the Department of Social Services, Department of Youth Services, and the Plymouth County District Attorney and a Trial Court Child Care Center.

"I've watched the faces of people coming in, not sure of where they're supposed to go, possibly in a traumatic situation," said Plymouth County

Juvenile Court Clerk-Magistrate Thomas R. Lebach. "Having the information table puts them much more at ease."

Volunteers began staffing the table in June, from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. every day the court is open, with one pair serving two days a week and three other pairs working one day each. The volunteers include a community college freshman, employees of a furniture store and telephone company, a retired nurse and several other retirees.

The volunteers received their education in another outreach program that Mr. Lebach coordinates, the Plymouth Citizens Trial Court Academy. Participants in the Academy gain a comprehensive overview of the court system over the course of eight, weekly two-hour sessions conducted by judges, clerks, probation officers, and law enforcement officers. It is modeled on a citizens academy that Norfolk Juvenile Court Clerk-Magistrate James F. Poirier and Dedham District Court Clerk-

*Information Desks**continued on page 7*

## Mini-Grants

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community. The grant helped to pay for the publication of a Spanish version of an informational court brochure, translated by Worcester Probate and Family Court Case Specialist Zenaida Burgos, and for a reception for members of the Latino community and outside agencies that serve them.

Approximately 60 people attended "Bienvenidos a Worcester Probate and Family Court," held at the Court from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in May. "The reception was to let people know what legal services are available to them, and what we do here," Ms. Anthony said.

Ms. Burgos interpreted welcoming remarks by First Justice Joseph Lian, Jr., and Register Peter M. Lukes, as well as short presentations by representatives of area service organizations, including the Legal Assistance Corp. of Central Massachusetts, the Worcester Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Program and Lawyer-for-a-Day program, and the Massachusetts Justice Project. Refreshments were prepared by a local Salvadoran restaurant.

"The professionals in the agencies were able to learn more about the Court, so that they could better advise their clients," Ms. Anthony said. They also used the evening as a way to build contacts with members of the bar and other service agencies.

Since the reception, Ms. Anthony has noticed that people coming to the Court, especially those referred by community service agencies, seem better informed. "People in agencies know where to direct people, and the people who come here know a little more about what to expect from the outset. It has been very helpful."

### Essex County Juvenile Court in Lynn

In Lynn, the Essex County Juvenile Court faced a similar need to reach out to the city's growing Cambodian community. A committee led by Court Clinic Director Jack Simons and Program Director Kris Latour Kennedy received a \$1,298

## Reinventing Justice Mini-Grant Recipients

### Cambridge District Court

East Cambridge Court Complex Video  
\$4,620

### Essex County Juvenile Court

Outreach effort to Cambodian community  
\$1,298

### Greenfield District Court

Community Justice Conference  
and Information Exchange  
\$4,000

### Ipswich District Court

Information brochure  
\$300

### Middlesex Superior Court/Lowell

Lowell Superior Courthouse  
Beautification Project  
\$4,500

### Newton District Court

Brochure, 'Help Card,' and outreach effort  
addressing youth substance abuse  
\$3,691

### Plymouth County Juvenile Court

Trial Court Academy/Information Desk  
\$3,666

### Essex Probate and Family Court/Salem

Information Desk  
\$725

### Trial Court Law Libraries

'Imagining the Future' long-range  
planning process  
\$1,450

### Worcester Probate and Family Court

Outreach effort to Latino community  
\$750

For more details on all the projects, go to the Judicial Branch Intranet site, at:  
<http://aotcweb/admin/planning/grants.html>

grant to hold two forums to increase understanding between the Court and Cambodian community.

In March, the committee arranged for a visit to the Court by Khmer Youth and Family Center counselor Vuthy Nol-Mantia, LICSW, who briefed court staff on the kinds of difficulties immigrants face in the United States. The war, terror, and famine of the country's recent history have made many Cambodians highly suspicious of government officials. Difficulties in earning their trust and explaining what services are available for helping them are compounded by a relatively high rate of illiteracy, he explained.

In June, the Court took a significant step in building lines of communication between the Court and Cambodian community by hosting a Family Forum at a nearby community center. "The Forum was clearly helpful in building a trusting relationship between Khmer family members and court staff," Ms. Latour Kennedy said.

First Justice Sally F. Padden and Judge Michael F. Edgerton emphasized the Court's goal of helping Lynn youth overcome any barriers facing

them. An interpreter translated responses by members of the audience as well as the speakers, who also included representatives of the Probation Office, Court Clinic, District Attorney's Office, and Department of Social Services.

The Forum helped the Cambodian participants realize that the Court, attorneys, and agencies such as DSS have different roles. "Many don't realize that they are separate," Ms. Latour Kennedy said. "It can be very difficult for people to understand who they should go to." She added that the organizers were confident that their guests also understood the basic messages of the Forum: that the Court is devoted to the best interests of the children who come before it, and that the Court staff wants to help.

"We hope that the Forums will provide the basis for further communication with parents," she said. "Our increased understanding of the Cambodian community has made us more comfortable, and that allows people to be more responsive to us. It allows us to communicate more effectively." ■



## Clerks, Registers, Media Members Discuss Access to Court Records

Approximately one hundred Clerk-Magistrates, Registers, Assistant Clerks, and Assistant Registers attended a program on "Public Records and Media Issues" in Worcester on November 9, co-sponsored by the Supreme Judicial Court's Judiciary/Media Committee and the Judicial Institute.

The program included an overview of the law on access to court records and proceedings by Superior Court Judge E. Susan Garsh; a presentation on the present and future of electronic access to court records by Bristol County Probate and Family Court Judge Anthony R. Nesi; an overview of media issues by Supreme Judicial Court Public Information Officer Joan Kenney; and panel discussions with



**Leominster District Court First Justice John J. Curran, third from left, moderates a panel discussion among, from left, Boston Globe reporter John Ellement, Worcester Telegram & Gazette reporter Gary Murray, New England Cable News technician John Stuart, NECN reporter Julia Bovey, and Hingham District Court First Assistant Clerk-Magistrate Andrew P. Quigley. The panel also included Boston Municipal Court Clerk-Magistrate for Criminal Business Daniel J. Hogan, and Norfolk Superior Court Assistant Clerk Janice C. Ugoccioni.**

members of the media, moderated by Appeals Court Justice Rudolph Kass

(Ret.) and Leominster District Court First Justice John J. Curran.

### Information Desks

Magistrate Salvatore Paterna began in 1996.

Mr. Lebach explained that the \$3,666 Reinventing Justice mini-grant helped both programs. It paid for the printing of informational brochures in English, Haitian, Portuguese, and Spanish that are available at the information booth, as well as for notebooks, light refreshments, and a bus trip to a House of Corrections for Academy participants.

Other courthouses have had information desks for several years. Mr. John J. Monteiro, a self-described "professional courtroom observer," has staffed the information desk at the Springfield Hall of Justice since 1989. He said his work in the insurance industry brought him into contact with the court system in 1976, when he began watching a case and "got so interested I never left."

After he retired, Hampden District Attorney William M. Bennett asked him to staff the information desk for as long as he wished. Ever since the invitation, he's usually been at the desk five days a week, from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

"I would do this for fifty more years, God willing," he said. "You have to give a little bit in life, and if I just stayed at home, what good would that do? I enjoy people, and they treat me very nicely here. Plus, it's a great education. I've learned a wealth of information."

### Future Information Desks

In addition to serving the members of the public in their respective courts, the information desks at West Roxbury District Court and Lynn District Court also are serving as models for future desks at Newburyport District Court and Essex Probate and Family Court. The desk in West Roxbury opened in August, 1998, and the one in Lynn began the following March.

Newburyport District Court First Justice Leah W. Sprague said the information desk will be the next step in an outreach effort that already includes a presentation of photos and information shown continuously on a computer monitor set up in the courthouse foyer.

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Newburyport District Court Judicial Assistant Marylou Williams created the presentation, called "Working Together," using PowerPoint software. It lasts approximately one minute and features photos of courtrooms, offices, and the judges and staff members who work in each.

In early 2002, however, the computerized introduction to the court will be upgraded with a staffed information booth. Newburyport Project Coordinator Linda Wilkinson noted that volunteers began submitting applications in October, and that they would soon be given an orientation to prepare for their roles in aiding the public.

"We're doing this in part because of how much emphasis SJC Chief Justice Margaret Marshall and Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara Dortch-Okara place on customer service within the courts," Judge Sprague said. "When people come to the courts, we all just want to make it a little easier on them." ■

## Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Marshall Addresses Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce

Exactly one month after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall addressed the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Breakfast Forum.

In her speech, titled "Freedom and Security: An Irreconcilable Conflict?" Chief Justice Marshall emphasized the importance of maintaining long fought for constitutional rights and freedoms during periods of national crisis.

Chief Justice Marshall received a standing ovation following her presentation and then engaged in a lively question-and-answer session with audience members.



*Photo courtesy of Fayfoto Inc.*

## CALENDAR

### JANUARY

- 9-10 Judicial Institute: "New Employee Orientation," for recently hired Trial Court support staff, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Leominster.
- 16 Judicial Institute: "Small Claims Rules," for Clerks and Assistant Clerks of selected departments, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Bridgewater. (Program also will be held on January 31 and February 5 in locations to be announced.)
- 21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day — Courts are closed.
- 25 Judicial Institute: "Domestic Violence/Legal Update," for Clerks and Assistant Clerks of selected court departments, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Randolph.
- 26 SJC Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall's keynote address at the Massachusetts Bar Association's Annual Conference, at the Marriott Copley Place in Boston.

### FEBRUARY

- 7 Judicial Institute: "Meet the Author Series," featuring James Ptacek, author of "Battered Women in the Courtroom: The Power of Judicial Response," for judges of all departments, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Brooke Courthouse in Boston.
- 13 Judicial Institute: "Language, Access, and Communication in the Courts," for judges of all departments, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Shrewsbury.
- 18 President's Day — Courts are closed.

### MARCH

- 5-8 "Judicial Orientation 2002," co-sponsored by the Judicial Institute and the Flaschner Judicial Institute, for judges new to the bench since June, 2000, in Salem.

For more information on Judicial Institute programs, call (617) 788-6775.

For more information on Flaschner Judicial Institute programs, call (617) 542-8838.

## The Court Compass

The Court Compass is a quarterly publication written and produced by the Public Information Office of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Please send questions, comments, ideas, or letters to Joan Kenney, Public Information Officer, or to Bruce Brock, Publications Specialist.

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